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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7059
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA EACTION REPORT

MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2006

In oday's Papers

PKK Tensions on the Rise in outtheast Turkey, Istanbul
All papers: Tension has been on the rise in several
citie in the mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey since
Tuesday's funeral of 14 PKK militants killed in clashes
with the Turkish security forces earlier last week.
Clashes with security forces last week have killed eight
people in the region. One protester died in the clashes
in Kiziltepe, Mardin and 10 people were injured over the
weekend. Youths have been fighting street battles for
days with police in the region's main city, Diyarbakir.
In Istanbul over the weekend, a few hundred PKK
sympathizers burned a commuter bus in the middle of the
city, causing the death of three people. On Saturday,
there were clashes in Silopi, near the Iraqi border.

Papers report a total of 565 protesters were detained,
with 247 of them arrested on Sunday, bringing to 445 the
total number of arrests in two days. The Hakkari
Governor's Office said most of the illegal demonstrators
were young people and children. The Prosecutor's office
has decided to arrest Ayhan Karabulut, the Batman
provincial chairman of Turkey's main Kurdish party, the
Democratic Society Party (DTP) and inspectors launched an
investigation into the mayor of Diyarbakir, Osman
Baydemir, for his meeting with the demonstrators earlier
last week.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said that the incidents
that have erupted in southeast Turkey kicked off when the
terrorist organization PKK began to lose strength.
Erdogan said at a meeting organized by his ruling AK
Party that the people of the region have been exploited
for years and that "they are discriminated against for
being Kurds." The DTP has called for an end to the
violence but has also asked Ankara to push through more

reforms in the southeast.

Papers quote businessmen from the southeast as saying the answer to terrorism in the region is more investment. "We ask for incentives, not financial support," the businessmen said, adding that children on the street would not throw stones at the police if they are given jobs. The economic/political daily Referans writes the cost of recent violence in southeastern city Diyarbakir is estimated at USD 15 million.

Saturday's Milliyet says the AKP government had decided to prepare a new package for fighting terrorism which would include the extension of the legal detention period. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said the government wanted to solve the problems within the framework of democracy, but would not hesitate to introduce "emergency rule" if necessary. EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn's office has urged Ankara to protect the cultural rights of the Kurds to ease the strains in the region. "We are aware of the serious terrorist problem in the region but it is a much wider problem than just a security issue," Rehn's office said. In Ankara, the parliament called a special session for Tuesday to discuss the violence. In a column entitled, the "PKK's Heavy Defeat," Ardan Zenturk wrote optimistically in the tabloid Star that while the mayor of Diyarbakir "praised the terror and the terrorists, in Mersin, Adana, Sanliurfa and Gaziantep the provocative incidents were overcome by the peoples' common sense." Zenturk concludes that "with the latest incidents, the Kurds in the region (including the ones in

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Northern Iraq) realized that the PKK do not fight for the benefit of the Kurds in Turkey, but only for its own presence. Our Kurdish friends will reject the PKK shadow over them and continue to coordinate with us all to fulfill economic and democratic conditions for a European Turkey."

Erdogan Appeals Court Decision on Caricatures
Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others:
Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has appealed a court decision that rejected compensation to him from "Penguin," a weekly humor magazine, for its cartoons depicting Erdogan as various animals in February last year. A local court had earlier ruled that portraying Erdogan as an animal was not an insult. In his appeal, Erdogan said the cartoons had constituted an assault against his personal rights. Penguin's cartoons were meant to protest a fine given to a political cartoonist in Cumhuriyet who had drawn Erdogan as a cat entangled in a ball of wool over his government's failure to pass a bill easing conditions for theology high-school (Imam-Hatip) graduates to continue university education in fields other than theology.

Washington Fears Iranian Nuclear Attack against Incirlik Airbase

All papers cite a British Sunday Telegraph story that Washington is concerned that Iran could launch a nuclear attack on Incirlik Airbase in southern Turkey. The Sunday Telegraph wrote that Washington feared Iran might launch nuclear attacks against American forces in the region, including Israel and Turkey.

Gul: Radar Station in Iskenderun Funded by NATO
All papers: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said in response to a motion by the opposition CHP that a radar station built in Iskenderun in southern Turkey was funded by NATO, but that it will be run by the Turkish Air Force Command.

Turkey Wants to Increase Trade with US Three-Fold
State Minister Kursad Tuzmen told the press on his return

from the annual ATC conference in Washington that by 2010, Turkey wanted to increase trade with the US to USD 30 billion from the existing USD 10 billion. Tuzmen said California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, and Texas were picked as "target states" for Turkish exporters and investors. Tuzmen also warned against increasing violence in southeast Turkey, emphasizing domestic and international investors would not come to a country where terrorism is intensifying.

TV News
(NTV, 8.00 a.m.)

Domestic News

- The ruling AK Party is to brief the parliament regarding the unrest in southeast Turkey at a special session on Tuesday.
- Concerns regarding foreign tourists visiting Turkey become true: The number of tourists arriving in Turkey's tourism capital Antalya falls 38 percent in the first three months compared to last year.
- A Turkish high court scrapped a controversial Interior Ministry circular for the establishment of special zones for the sale of alcohol in Turkish towns.

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International News

- Israeli President Moshe Katsav met with Olmert's Kadima party representatives and will talk with other parties in an effort to help establishment of a coalition government.
- US and British foreign secretaries, Rice and Straw, paid a surprise visit to Baghdad on Sunday to ask the Iraqis to speed up government formation work.
- Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyanni said the Annan Plan for reunification of Cyprus had "become history" when it was rejected by the Greek Cypriots.
- The European Commission is expected to recommend in May that Bulgaria and Romania be admitted to the European Union on January 1, 2007.
- A Turkish truck driver, Suha Ates, was killed in Iraq over the weekend while he was ferrying cargo from Ankara to Baghdad.
- Taliban gunmen shot dead a Turkish engineer in Farah province in western Afghanistan.

Economy News

- Turkish growth for 2005 was calculated as 7.6 percent, and per capita income is reported as USD 5,000.
- Despite problems on Cyprus, separatist terror and questions regarding the health of the Turkish economy, Greece's National Bank is bidding to buy Turkey's Finansbank for USD 2.7 billion. US-based Citibank is the other bank seeking to buy Finansbank. Finansbank has 219 branches across Turkey and operations in 10 countries. Turkey's economic recovery has made Turkish banks, with access to an under-developed market of 72 million people, an attraction for foreign players seeking new sources of growth.
- Turkish exports increased 7.4 percent in the first three months of the year.

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